



**Faith Formation
Catechist
Handbook
2011-2012**

*Thank you for all your commitment
and dedication to serve the families
of All Saints Catholic Church as
catechists and assistants. May the
gift of your time, talent, and self be
richly rewarded by our Lord!*

God Bless!

*Mandie DeVries
Director of Faith Formation
Office 515/265-5001 x201
mandie@dmallsaints.org
cell 515/402-6549*

*Julie Burdt
Coordinator of Adolescent Programs
cell 515-201-4766
julie@dmallsaints.org*

*Maria Campbell
Assistant of Faith Formation
maria@dmallsaints.org*

website: www.dmallssaints.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission of Youth Catechesis	4
Youth Catechist Role Description	5
Guidelines for Volunteer Catechists	6-7
Class Time, Agenda & Activities	6
Student Attendance	7
Student Absence.....	7
Visitors	7
Illness/Injury	7-8
Supervision	8
Dismissal.....	8
Cancellation	9
Substitute Catechists	9
Communication with Parents	9
Classroom Use/Management.....	9-10
Supplies	10
Food/Treats.....	10
Photos/Field Trips/Guest Speakers	10-11
Professionalism.....	11
Behavior Guidelines	11-12
Breach of Discipline	12
Discipline Correction Procedure.....	12-13
Emergency Procedures.....	13
Fire.....	13
Tornado.....	13
Strangers in the Building	14
Volunteer Guidelines.....	14
Other Notes, Questions or Comments	15



All Saints Parish

Mission of Youth Catechesis

“The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion, and intimacy with Jesus Christ. All evangelizing activity is understood as promoting communion with Jesus Christ.” (GDC 80)

What does catechesis involve?

Lead others to choose and find joy in the narrow path of Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:13-14).

Catechesis is a formation of the total self through prayer, study, and community into the Triune life of God.

Formation stems from proclamation of the Gospel, examination of the reasons for belief, experience of Christian living, celebration of the sacraments, integration into the ecclesial community, and apostolic witness. (CCC 6)

How to accomplish catechesis?

Commitment to own personal faith formation

- Pray
 - Read
 - Study
-
- Exemplify Christian living—Live as a disciple of Christ
 - Help others encounter Christ
 - Build faith community among students
 - Share the story of your own faith journey
 - Lead children in prayer
 - Build from the doctrine of the Church
 - Plant seeds



All Saints Parish

Youth Catechist Role Description

Amount of Time: 2-3 hours weekly including class & prep time

Location: All Saints Parish

Pre-K-7 Supervisor: Mandie DeVries, Director of Faith Formation

8-12 Supervisor: Julie Burdt, Coordinator of Adolescent Programs

Length of Commitment: One Year

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Prepare and teach 1.25 hour class weekly from September to April
- Attend all in-service meetings
- Arrive for class at least 15 minutes early
- Teach the approved curriculum using texts and/or materials provided
- Supervise children at all times
- Contact supervisor regarding absence so a substitute can be located
- Maintain orderly classroom and take responsibility for classroom use—make sure your space is ready for the next class
- Participate in mass and prayer experiences with class

SUPPORT PROVIDED:

- Training and direction for program
- Tuition assistance for CGS training
- Textbooks, teacher manuals, other resources needed
- Classroom supplies
- Duplicates of forms or worksheets
- Enforce discipline policy

FAITH BACKGROUND:

- Fully initiated Catholic in good standing
- Person of faith
- Person of prayer
- Participate in mass and sacramental life of the Church
- Active member of All Saints Parish
- Personal faith formation opportunities



Guidelines for Volunteer Catechists

CLASS TIME, AGENDA & ACTIVITIES

Class time is from 9:45-11:00 am on Sundays, or 3:50-5:05 pm, 5:30 – 7:00 pm or 6:45 – 8:15 pm on Wednesday nights.

Please be in the building no later than 15 minutes prior to class to prepare. Stop in the Faith Formation office to pick up any mail in your box, then proceed to your classroom. Look over your classroom and report anything broken or unusual to the Faith Formation office staff after class.

We have many materials to help supplement upper class work, such as costumes for acting out Scripture, storybooks, art books, and other resources. This is a great way to energize students and to help them to learn the lesson using materials other than the text.

The most important thing you can remember is that the faith is not TAUGHT, but CAUGHT. Be a faithful presence to the children. It will make all the difference!

Faith Formation for 5:30 and 6:45 Wednesday sessions will involve Communal Prayer and music in the church every Wednesday night, beginning at 6:45. Catechists, please spread out among the children and use the opportunity to model appropriate prayerful and respectful behavior for the children and encourage them to act similarly.

Your class may request the opportunity to lead one of these prayer services. These services will last approximately 15 minutes. Please prepare at least a week in advance and place your music selections in the box for Bill and Pam.

Parents are encouraged to pray with us and may sit in the pew with their child(ren) if they wish.



STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Each class will have TWO attendance sheets. Attendance folders will be kept in your mailbox. Be sure to pick it up before the start of class. Mark the attendance sheet in your folder “X” for present, “A” for absent, “Ex” for excused absence, and “T” for tardy. Hang the folder on the outside doorknob of your classroom within 30 minutes of class start for the office staff to collect. You will keep the second sheet IN your classroom to be brought with you in case of a fire drill or emergency.

If a child arrives after the attendance folder has been collected, please mark the correct information in the folder the next week.

STUDENT ABSENCE

If parents call before class saying their child(ren) will not be in attendance, a note will be left in your box. If you have a student who is absent twice in succession, please make a phone call to the parents. Please bring excessive absence to the director’s attention, as a conference with parents may be needed.

VISITORS

The students are discouraged from bringing visitors with them to class, not because we don’t wish to share the faith, but due to logistical and liability reasons. If it is necessary, parents are asked to talk with their child’s catechist prior to bringing a visitor to class. All visitors must stop at the Faith Formation office before the beginning of class. Visitors are expected to follow all guidelines and rules of participation. They may only stay for one evening without registration.

ILLNESS/INJURY

If a child becomes ill or injured during class, please have another student accompany him/her to the office. Office staff will contact parents if necessary. If a child should vomit (or have an *accident*) in the classroom, send office staff will help clean up as we remove the other students from the room. Consider blood and other body fluids as infectious. Reasonable precautions can help limit exposure to these potentially infectious materials.



The Faith Formation office has a First Aid kit with disposable gloves, band aids, and Kleenex. In the event of blood and bodily fluids, please use rubber gloves and avoid contact. These materials need special disposal—please send for office staff to assist. Should a serious injury occur, an injury report must be completed and filed out in the Faith Formation office for legal purposes.

SUPERVISION

Never leave the class unattended! If you do not have an assistant, please send a student to the Faith Formation office if you need additional supplies or help during class. Also: program your supervisor's number into your cell phone if you have one, as this is an easy way to get a hold of her during class without leaving the room. You are responsible for the students during religious education class time.

Students should sit on chairs or the floor, never on tables or desks. Explain to the students they are to respect the property and not remove items from cabinets without your permission.

You may also need to supervise other classes in large group gatherings: liturgies, hallways/ driveways, restrooms, socials, or emergencies. Encourage all students to cooperate and follow all program rules.



DISMISSAL

Parents will come to the classrooms for Sunday and 3:50 Wednesday classes for dismissal. During the 5:30 session, all students will leave through the main doors on the upper level following the prayer service. Children younger than 2nd grade will need to be picked up by a parent or older sibling. The later session will be dismissed at 8:15 pm from their classes through the upper doors.

If parents wish to pick up their child(ren) before class ends, they must notify Mandie in advance and a note in your box. The parents must stop in the Faith Formation office before withdrawing

the child from the classroom,
then accompany the child out.

CANCELLED

CANCELLATION

In the event of severe weather, classes may be cancelled. If Saydel School cancels classes or dismisses early due to weather, All Saints Faith Formation will automatically be cancelled. Listen for reports of school cancellations on radio and TV. You will be contacted upon cancellation via email, but it is not necessary that you call your students.

SUBSTITUTE CATECHISTS

Please inform your supervisor as soon as possible if you need to miss a class, and arrangements will be made for a qualified substitute. **Please do not take it upon yourself to find a replacement unless the replacement is currently a catechist in another time.** Leave all teaching materials and prepared lesson plans in your mailbox in the Faith Formation office before class.



COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Catechists are encouraged to call each parent before the beginning of class, and write an introductory letter to the student's parents early in the year. Cooperation with parents involves staying in touch with what's happening in the classroom. Any contact with parents concerning discipline or permission slips should be discussed with your supervisor so that she can be informed in case a parent were to call her.

CLASSROOM USE/MANGEMENT (For textbook classes)

- Assign the students to a chair. Keep a seating chart.
- Rearrange the room if needed but return everything to its proper order at the end of class.
- Supplies are kept in each classroom. Additional supplies are located in the Faith Formation office.
- PLEASE NOTE: No food, drink, or gum is allowed in the classroom. (If you would like special permission please contact the office staff)



- Please erase boards at the end of class.
- After the 6:45 class, close all windows, turn off lights, and close door before leaving.
- Decorate bulletin boards or walls appropriately along with other catechists using the same space.
- Respect that you use shared space with other parish groups.



SUPPLIES

- If you need additional supplies or copies made, please let me know before the day of the class you need it. Request forms are located in the Faith Formation office. You can call Mandie anytime at the office or at home in

the evenings.

- TV/VCRs are shared on a first come-first serve basis. Please schedule one as soon as you know you will need it.

FOOD/TREATS

Do not allow students to bring gum, candy, or pop into the classroom. Ask the student to dispose of it before class. Do not encourage students to bring birthday treats. **If they do, distribute them at the end of class to be taken home to eat.**



The Faith Formation program will have celebrations throughout the year. Please do not plan additional parties for your classroom.

PHOTOS/FIELD TRIPS/GUEST SPEAKERS

Please contact office staff prior to any picture taking, making arrangements for a field trip or inviting guest speakers. Permission forms and letters to parents will need to be completed. The Diocese of Des Moines requires that there be a minimum of one chaperone per six participants during an off-site trip. Fr. Bob would be happy to visit your classroom. Let one of the staff know ASAP when you know you'd like to have him come.



PROFESSIONALISM

Formation of youth is primarily done by example rather than verbal instruction. Catechists should model appropriate behavior: participation at Sunday Eucharist and other prayer, living a moral life as directed by Christ through the Church, modest dress, clean and positive language and behavior.

The catechist is responsible for discipline and classroom management. Be consistent and upfront about expectations. Management concerns should be handled in a positive manner. Physical contact as discipline is absolutely forbidden. Children can be shown appropriate physical affection, the upper back and shoulder is the appropriate place unless it makes the child uncomfortable.

When an individual discloses private information, catechists are expected to keep it in confidence revealing only what is necessary to the appropriate people. Catechists must ensure that opinions and facts concerning students are disclosed only to those who have a legitimate right to know. Comments to parents should be about the parents' own child(ren) only. If a catechist learns that a student intends to harm self or others, the catechist must reveal that information even if a promise of confidentiality has been given and parents notified. Catechists are permissive reporters of child abuse.

BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

- Everyone is to be treated courteously and with respect including other children, catechists, volunteers, and parents.
- Students will come to class prepared to learn and willing to participate in activities. No student will be allowed to interfere with the learning and participation of other students.
- No yelling or running in the building.
- Respect the authority of the catechist and other staff.
- Respect all property and share in the care of your classroom.



BREACH OF DISCIPLINE

Consistent discipline is the training that develops self-control, character, orderly conduct, and acceptance and respect of appropriate authority. A breach of discipline is any conduct of students which interferes with the educational program, learning, or welfare of other students and will not be tolerated.

Examples of breach of discipline:



- Verbal outbursts disrupting class or resulting in a loss of self control.
- Open defiance involving refusal to conform to the rules, regulations, or directions.
 - Profane and obscene language, material, or gestures.
- Personal misbehavior such as threats, harassments, intimidation, or extortion.
- Display of racial or religious bigotry or intolerance.
- Willful destruction of parish or others' property.
- Setting fires or false alarms.
- Physical attack on others or threat of physical violence.
- The use, possession, purchase, or sale of alcohol, tobacco, drug, or paraphernalia promoting such.
- Possession of weapons such as guns, knives, fireworks, or other dangerous objects or look-alikes.

DISCIPLINE CORRECTION PROCEDURE

Students will be verbally corrected and given a choice to either cooperate appropriately or go to the Faith Formation office. If the child chooses to stay and the behavior continues, he/she will be sent to the Faith Formation office. Catechists will contact the parents to discuss the problem and appropriate solutions. Recurrent misbehavior will result in a conference with parents, catechist, student, and appropriate office staff. The pastor will be informed and will participate in conferences as needed. Actions such as fighting, danger to others, insubordination, or insolence will result in removal from the scene and an immediate parent conference.

In the case of repeated failure to behave and/or gross violations of the discipline guidelines, the student will be asked to leave the program.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Please review emergency procedures with your students on the first class. In case of an emergency it is imperative that the catechist knows who is present at class that night. **Carry your classroom attendance list when exiting.** Shut all windows, turn off lights, and close door. Verify that all students are present at the appropriate meeting place and maintain order and discipline.

FIRE

→ **Downstairs classrooms exit through the West door and go to the grass across the parking lot staying with your class.**

→ **Level II and III atria will exit through the West Atrium door and cross to the grass across from the parking lot.**

→ **Upper level classrooms** go out main south doors.



TORNADO

→ **Upper level** must come down the stairs lining both sides of the hallway on the lower level.

→ **West classroom** go to the east classroom.

→ **South classrooms** proceed to center St. Dominic room between east and west classrooms.

→ **High School** proceed to St. Dominic room between east and west classrooms.



Students are to remain silent during all emergency situations and during all practice drills.

STRANGERS IN THE BUILDING

People who are in the building without approval or who seem to be wandering, should be asked if they need assistance. Please accompany him/her to the Faith Formation office.

VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

New Catechists and volunteers working with youth on a regular basis need to complete a diocesan volunteer application and background check. A 2 hour Virtus training session will need to be completed BEFORE classes begin. There are no exceptions to this requirement. NEW: This class may now be completed ONLINE!! Please register at www.Virtus.org.

Catechists should conduct themselves in a respectful Christian manner, as we believe Christ has taught us, acting “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:2-3). In all such interactions, all parties should strive to “be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven [us] in Christ” (Ephesians 4:32). In following Christ’s example, we can create an environment that puts our youth in touch, communion, and intimacy with Jesus Christ.



OTHER NOTES, QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

Please do not hesitate to call/email us at the Parish Office or via cell phone. We are here to serve. If we can help you, we will!



All Saints Catholic Church

650 NE 52nd Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50313

Phone - 515/265-5001

Fax - 515/265-5636

website: www.dmall Saints.org